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Viewing cable 09PORTAUPRINCE73, YOU CAN GO HOME AGAIN: CANADIAN GOVERNOR GENERAL SHINES IN HAITI

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
09PORTAUPRINCE73	2009-01-23 18:36	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Port Au Prince

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.haiti-liberte.com/archives/volume4-51/vendeur%20de%20drogue.asp>
<http://www.haiti-liberte.com/archives/volume4-51/Mafia%20boss.asp>

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PP RUEHQU
DE RUEHPU #0073/01 0231836
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 231836Z JAN 09
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INFO RUEHZH/HAITI COLLECTIVE
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 2186
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SUBJECT: YOU CAN GO HOME AGAIN: CANADIAN GOVERNOR GENERAL SHINES IN HAITI

Classified By: Ambassador Janet A. Sanderson, reason 1.5(b) and (d).

¶1. (U) During her four day working visit to Haiti January 15-19, Canadian Governor General Michaëlle Jean once again charmed her former countrymen. The Governor General, accompanied by her husband, met with senior government officials, including president Rene Preval and Prime Minister Michele Pierre-Louis, dined with the donor community, visited the hurricane-damaged village of Ennery in the Artibonite Valley to highlight Canadian relief efforts, stopped by the Bel-Air slum in Port au Prince, where she had been forbidden to go in 2006 due to security concerns, and made a sentimental pilgrimage to her family's former home in Les Cayes. Haitians, thrilled by her visit, turned out en masse to welcome Jean home. Jean, whose family fled Haiti in 1968 during the Duvalier era, spoke movingly of her experiences in the country as a child and stressed Canada's historic and neighborly links to Haiti.

¶2. (C) Canadian Ambassador Gilles Rivard reports that the visit went extremely well, despite some protocol challenges. (The GG, for instance, skipped the port city of Gonaives to avoid having to meet Artibonite Senator Youri Latortue who is widely believed to be associated with drug trafficking and thus unable to get a Canadian visa.) Jean was very well received during the visit and, according to the Ambassador, particularly appreciated her extended time with the Prime Minister. The Canadians, he said, very deliberately decided to spotlight Pierre-Louis during the visit; the GG spent a great deal of time with her, both one-on-one, and in broader meetings with her Cabinet. Their wide-ranging discussions focused on job creation, hurricane reconstruction, judicial and police reform, and the forthcoming senatorial elections, with the PM strongly articulating her support for the electoral process. The two also conducted a widely publicized joint press availability and traveled together to Les Cayes. Pierre-Louis, the Ambassador reported, flourished visibly under the attention, although he noted that she uttered not a word during the Governor General's meetings with the president.

¶3. (C) Jean met with Preval twice, and attended an intimate birthday celebration in honor of his 66th birthday January 17. According to Rivard, the GG strongly urged that Preval commit to attending the Summit of the Americas. After some initial hesitation, he did state that he would be there. She also encouraged him to move forward with the long-delayed Donors' Conference, stressing that it was essential to keep the international community focused on Haiti. She urged him to think of the Conference as a beginning of a process, rather than an end, and suggested that it was an opportunity for his government to refocus their vision of Haiti's future. Preval's reaction was, Rivard reports, lukewarm at best.

¶4. (C) For his part, Rivard said, Preval only had two things on his agenda in his meetings with Jean: Constitutional reform and drugs. He was reluctant to be drawn into any long range discussion of Haiti's future and deflected questions on his possible legacy. He attributed Haiti's current political malaise to the constitution, arguing that it is inherently destabilizing and must be changed. He outlined his efforts to rework the constitution, including the recent recreation of a constitutional reform commission, saying that absent constitutional reform a transition to the next president may prove problematic. On drugs, Preval told the GG that trafficking through Haiti is not a Haitian problem but an American problem, and one the US has failed to deal with. Drugs feed corruption in the political process and corruption eats away at Haiti's fragile stability. Rivard suggested that a professional, effective police such as Canada is attempting to build with the HNP is a vital element of addressing the drug problem but Preval brushed the comment off, reiterating his view that drugs are not a Haitian problem.

¶5. (C) Prior to the formal meetings with Preval, Jean held a

brainstorming dinner with representatives of key donor countries and the IFIs. She observed that since her visit in 2006 for the Presidential inauguration, she has seen only modest progress here. She noted with regret an impression of "lassitude" that Preval and his government appear to demonstrate when clear leadership is needed. She expressed her personal thanks for continued international cooperation but worried aloud that the average Haitian has yet to see the impact of foreign assistance. She suggested that others in the international community work to give the Prime Minister a higher political profile, particularly through visits to major capitals, while recognizing that Preval is unlikely to grant Pierre Louis much independence.

SANDERSON